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(56) Documents cited

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US 4219851 A

(58) Field of search

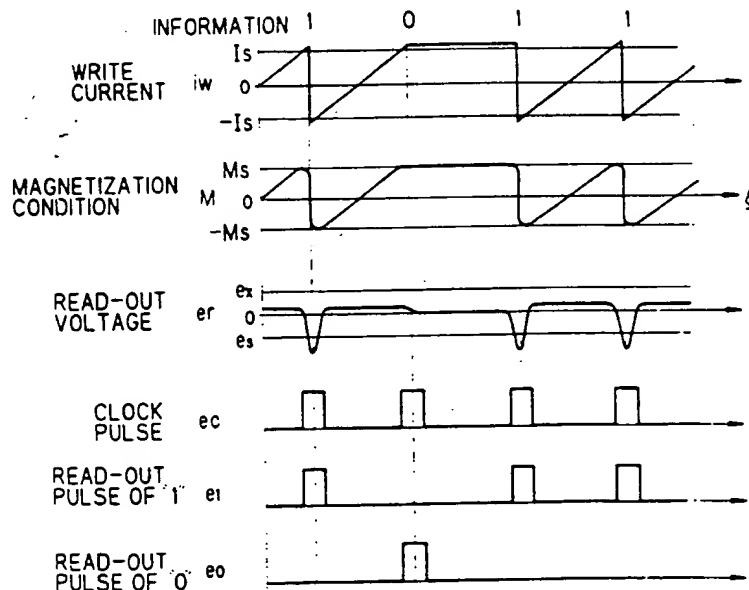
UK CL (Edition J) G5R RHB

INT CL^{*} G11B

(54) Magnetic record medium and method of recording and reproducing security information

(57) A magnetic record medium has security information recorded on it as a combination of changes in its magnetisation condition having a steep (data 1) and shallow (data 0) gradient. Such security information is reproduced by a detecting means which has a differentiating function and produces output pulses (er). To record security information a magnetic writing means (1) (Fig 1A) writes information on a magnetic record medium (2) by a combination of steep and shallow gradient changes of write current.

FIG. 1 (B)



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FIG. 1 (A)

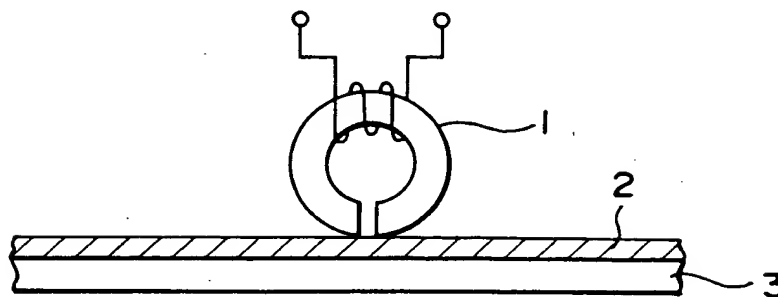


FIG. 1 (B)

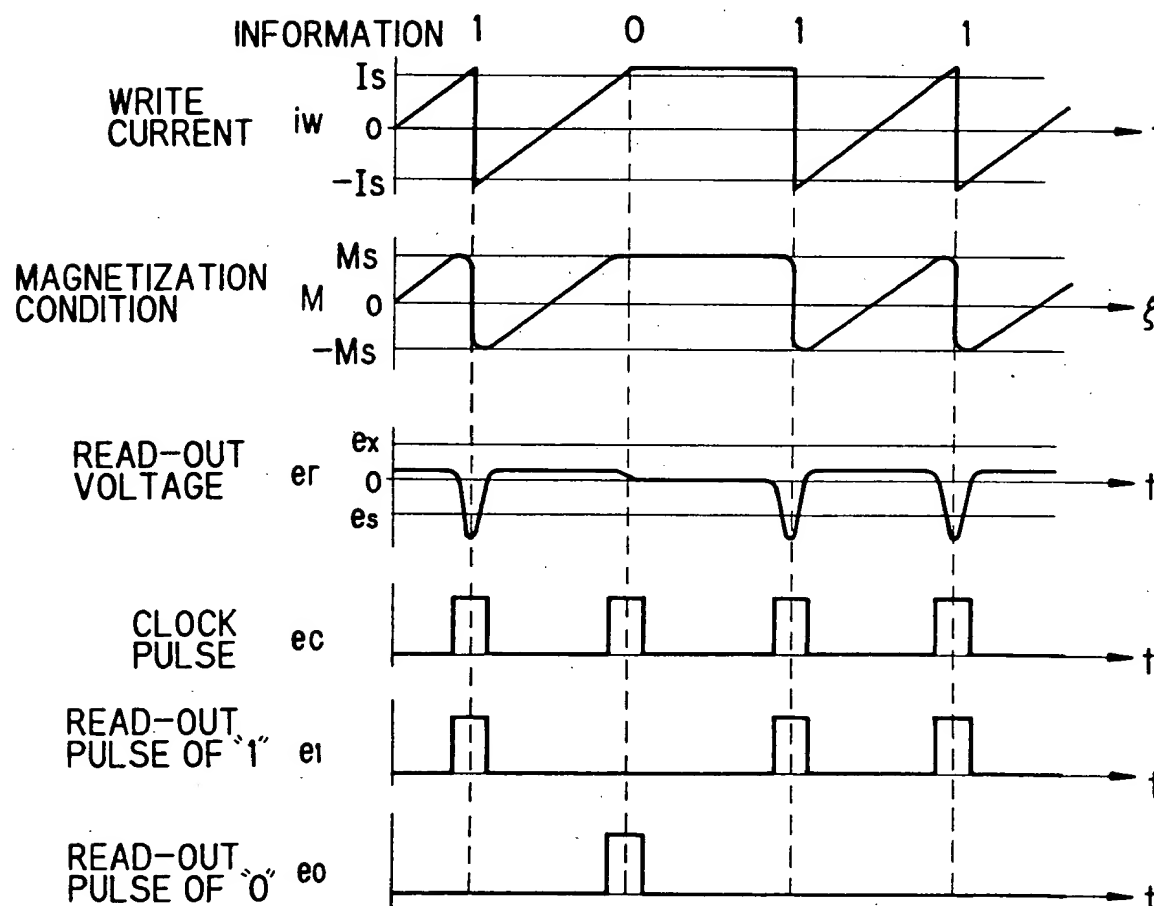


FIG. 2

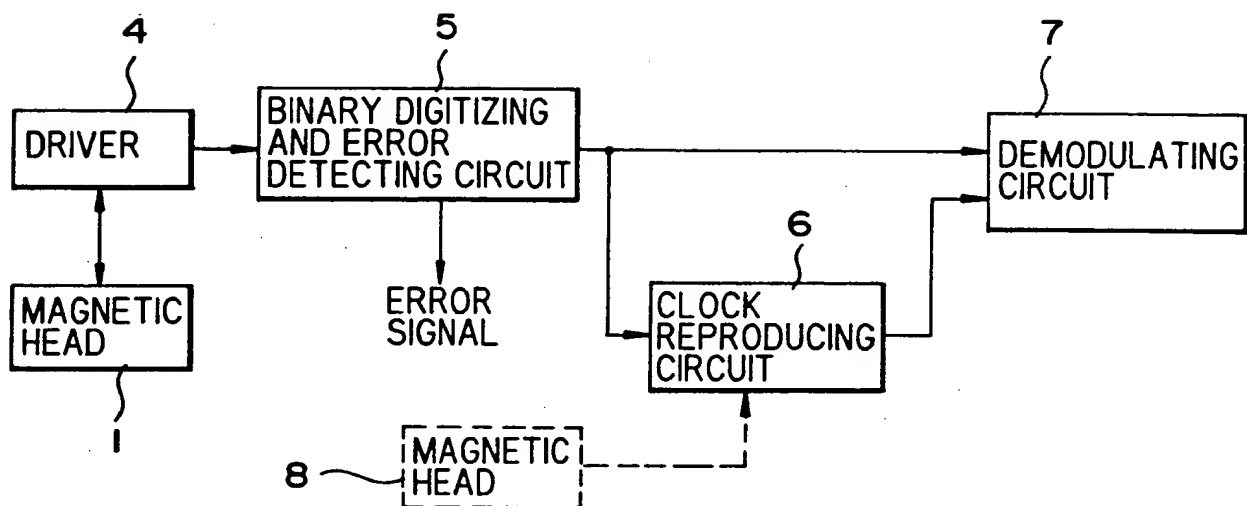


FIG. 3

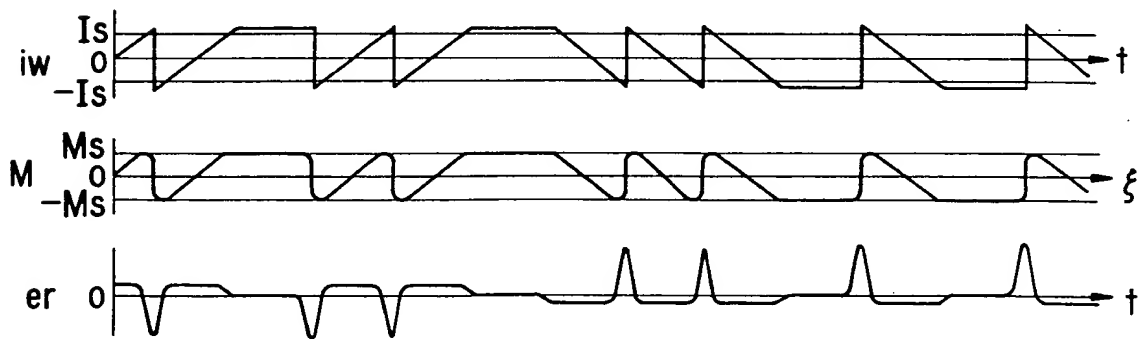
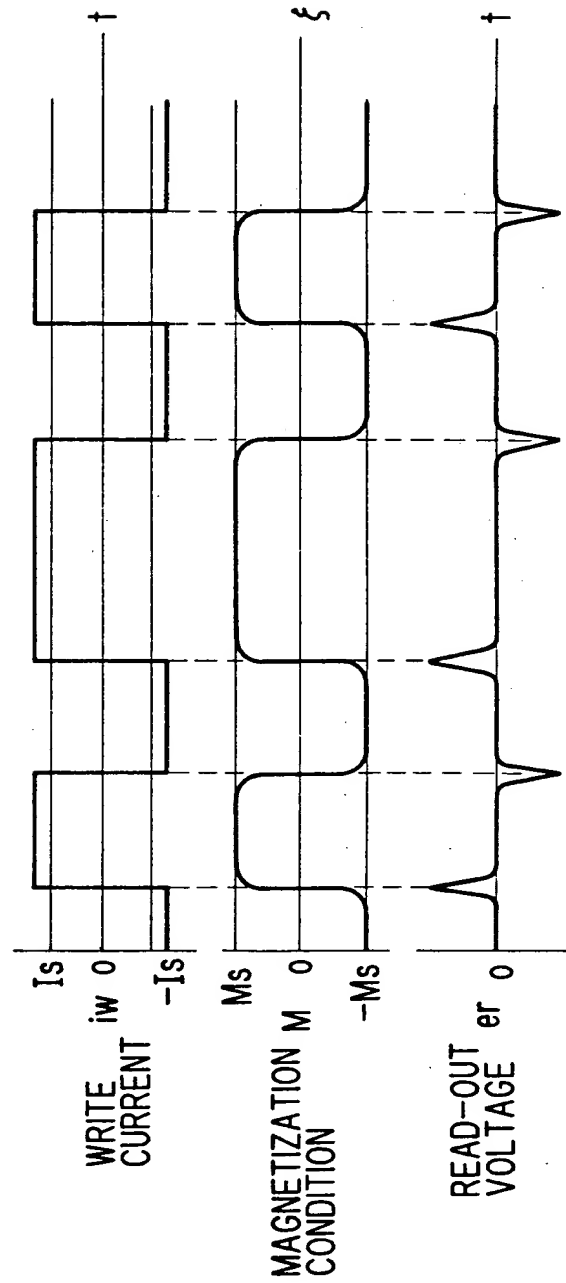


FIG. 4



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Magnetic Record Medium And Method Of Recording And
Reproducing Security Information On And From It

5 This invention relates to a magnetic record medium
and particularly to recording and reproduction of
security information on and from a magnetic record
medium.

An exemplary one of conventional methods of
recording information on a magnetic record medium is
10 illustrated in a waveform diagram of Figure 4.

Referring to Figure 4, digital magnetic recording
for recording digital information on a magnetic record
medium is effected by flowing write current i_w in the
form of pulses having an absolute value greater than I_s
15 through a magnetic head where I_s or $-I_s$ is an electric
current necessary to attain saturation magnetisation M_s
or $-M_s$, respectively, of a record medium.

With the record medium, the magnetisation condition
thereof exhibits steep changes between M_s and $-M_s$ in
20 accordance with information. Accordingly, if the record
medium is scanned by the magnetic head to read out the
recorded information on the record medium, then a read
signal can be obtained the voltage of which is reversed
in polarity at each point at which the magnetisation
25 condition is changed in accordance with a changing
direction of the magnetisation condition as seen from a
waveform as shown in Figure 4.

To prevent production of a counterfeit magnetic
medium or tampering with a true magnetic medium,
30 naturally it is necessary to keep the true/false
determination method secret, and, in addition, it is
desirable to make it difficult for a false user to
produce a counterfeit magnetic medium. In this regard, a
conventional magnetic record medium is not satisfactory

in security since it depends on a common digital recording method as described above.

According to a first aspect of this invention a magnetic record medium has security information recorded
5 on it as a combination of changes of magnetisation condition having a steep gradient and changes of magnetisation condition having a shallower gradient.

According to a second aspect of this invention a method of reproducing a magnetic record medium in
10 accordance with the first aspect of this invention comprises reproducing the security information with a detecting means which has a differentiating function.

According to a third aspect of this invention an information recording method for writing a magnetic
15 record medium in accordance with the first aspect of this invention drives a magnetic writing means with a write current having a combination of steep and shallow gradient changes.

With the present invention, as distinct from a
20 conventional digital recording method having a read-out voltage the polarity of which is alternately reversed, a read-out voltage having a fixed polarity can be obtained. Accordingly, detection of any reversal in polarity can be used as a security check.

25 Particular examples in accordance with this invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings; in which:-

Figure 1(A) is a schematic view illustrating the general construction of a magnetic head and a magnetic
30 record medium, and Figure 1(B) is a waveform diagram illustrating an information recording method and an information reproducing method according to a first example of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a reproducing device
35 to which the present invention is applied;

Figure 3 is a waveform diagram illustrating an information recording and reproducing method according to a second embodiment of the present invention; and,

Figure 4 is a waveform diagram illustrating a
5 conventional method of recording information on a magnetic record medium.

Referring first to Figure 1(A), there is illustrated schematic construction of a magnetic head and a magnetic record medium. The magnetic head is generally denoted at
10 1 and adapted to scan the record medium denoted at 2 on a base plate 3 to effect recording or reproduction of information on or from the record medium 2 in such a manner as described below. It is to be noted that digital recording based on the NRZI method is employed
15 here.

Writing Information

Where information is, for example, "1011" as shown in Fig 1(B), write current i_w to be supplied to the magnetic head 1 is changed steeply from $+I_s$ to $-I_s$ only when the
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contents of information to be written is "1", but such write current i_w is changed moderately in any other instance.

Consequently, the magnetization condition M of the record medium 2 presents a steep change from $+M_s$ to $-M_s$ only at each "1" in accordance with such write current i_w but presents a moderate change at any other position of the record medium 2.

Reproduction of Information

When the record medium 2 on which the information "1011" is recorded in this manner is scanned by the magnetic head 1, as the read-out voltage e_r induced in the magnetic head 1 has a proportional relationship to a change in magnetic flux, a pulse appears at a position of the read-out voltage e_r where the magnetization condition M on the record medium 2 exhibits a steep change. In particular, the read-out voltage e_r presents a pulse of a great magnitude on the - side at a position of the information "1" at which the magnetization condition M changes steeply, but presents a little deviation to the + side at any position where the magnetization condition M presents a moderate change.

Accordingly, if a suitable slice level e_s is set, then a pulse e_1 corresponding to the information "1" can be reproduced, and a pulse e_0 corresponding to the information "0" can be reproduced from such pulses e_1 and clock pulses e_c .

Further, if a suitable error detection level e_x is set on the + side of the read-out voltage e_r , then security

checking can be made. In particular, if a magnetic record medium is used on which information is recorded not based on such a recording method as employed in the present embodiment but based on a common recording method, then the read-out voltage will change alternately between the positive and negative values. Consequently, such false magnetic record medium is detected with reference to the error detection level ex, and it is possible to make use of such false magnetic record medium impossible. Accordingly, if the recording method as in the embodiment described above is applied to recording of security information, then the security of a magnetic card or the like can be improved.

It is to be noted that while the NRZI method is used as a digital recording method in the embodiment described above, the digital recording method is not limited to this and may be some other digital recording method such as the NRZ, FM, PM or MFM method.

Referring now to FIG. 2, there is shown general construction of a reproducing device according to the present invention. The reproducing device shown is principally applied for a self-clockable recording method and includes a driver 4 by which the magnetic head 1 is driven. A read-out signal of the magnetic head 1 is delivered to a binary digitizing and error detecting circuit 5, in which a pulse el is extracted using the slice level es and parity check is effected using the error detection level ex as described

hereinabove.

The binary digitized pulse signal e_1 is delivered to a clock reproducing circuit 6 by which clock pulses e_c are reproduced. Then, a demodulating circuit 7 reproduces the information recorded on the record medium from the signals e_1 and e_c .

It is to be noted that, where a recording method which is not self-clockable is employed, clocks may be read out separately by means of another magnetic head 8.

Referring now to FIG. 3, there is illustrated a recording and reproducing method according to a second embodiment of the present invention. According to the method, security information is recorded such that portions in which write current i_w is changed steeply from $+I_s$ to $-I_s$ and portion in which write current i_w is changed steeply from $-I_s$ to $+I_s$ are included in a suitably mixed manner. With the method, the security can be improved further.

Since the present invention has such a construction as described hereinabove, the following effects can be attained.

As distinct from such a read-out voltage as based on a conventional digital recording method wherein the polarity is alternately reversed, a read-out voltage having a fixed one polarity between the positive and negative polarities can be obtained, and accordingly, also the reversal in polarity can be utilized as security information. Accordingly, the security can be further improved.

CLAIMS

1. A magnetic record medium having security information recorded on it as a combination of changes of magnetisation condition having a steep gradient and changes of magnetisation condition having a shallower gradient.

2. An information reproduction method for reproducing security information recorded on a magnetic record medium in accordance with claim 1, comprising reproducing the security information with a detecting means which has a differentiating function.

3. An information recording method wherein a magnetic writing means is used for writing security information on a magnetic record medium in accordance with claim 1, the security information being recorded on a magnetic record medium by driving the magnetic writing means with a write current having a combination of steep and shallow gradient changes.

4. A magnetic record medium substantially as described with reference to Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings.

5. An information reproduction method substantially as described with reference to Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings.

6. An information recording method substantially as described with reference to Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings.

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